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Minutes of Meeting of the **Planning Committee Meeting** held on **22nd August 2025** in **Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate, BN26 6AL at 10:00am.**

PRESENT: Councillors D Watts, M Piper, D Murray, C Berry, J Heward, G Archer, M Cunningham, W Heasman O'Neill, D Dunbar, S Shing **(10)**

NOT PRESENT: Councillors J Keen **(1)**

1 member of the public present

13875 Item 1: Opportunity for Public Comment for items on the agenda

None

13876 Item 2: Apologies for absence

Apologies from Cllr J Keen

No other apologies received

13877 Item 3: Declarations of interest

S Shing in Item 4: Non-prejudicial

13878 Item 4: Planning Application WD/2025/0904/MAJ:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/Planning/Display/WD/2025/0904/MAJ>

HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION COMPROMISING: FULL APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A FOOD STORE (USE CLASS E(A)) WITH ASSOCIATED ROADS, PARKING, SERVICING AREA, AND LANDSCAPING; AND OUTLINE APPLICATION (ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR ACCESS) FOR THE ERECTION OF A CARE HOME (CLASS C2), WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS ROADS, PARKING, SERVICING AREA, AND LANDSCAPING.

Comments:

Access and Highways Concerns:

- The proposed access is located on the busiest road in the area and the second busiest in the country. A major concern is the absence of a highway survey and the lack of comment from Highways at this stage. It is unclear how the town council can provide meaningful input without the full application being available.
- The road is a single carriageway and is supposedly part of a bus route intended to improve bus flow. However, the site is located on the brow of a hill, raising visibility and safety concerns.
- There are serious concerns that drivers unable to turn right will divert through Broad Road, Coppice Avenue, Farmlands Avenue, and Wannock Road, using them as “rat runs.” There is also a risk of dangerous U-turns being made.
- Despite the likelihood that Highways may raise no objections (as seen in previous applications), we maintain serious concerns about the safety and danger posed by this junction.

Traffic and Transport Assessment:

- No formal Highways report on traffic has yet been provided and no apparent consultation with highways has taken place? The comments reference a “sensitivity test,” but it is unclear what this is based on. It appears to rely on desktop calculations that do not reflect reality, figures seemingly “plucked from thin air.”
- The desktop exercise appears to use data from pandemic traffic levels, which are not a realistic or accurate reflection of current or future trip numbers.
- Even with bumper-to-bumper traffic, there will be at least three junctions onto this road. One junction will serve a medical centre with constant traffic flow, another will serve 700 homes (potentially an additional 1,400 vehicles), and another will serve employment space (estimated 900 vehicle movements), plus a school with peak-time traffic.
- There are significant concerns about any access from Courtland Road, which is unsuitable. The planning department must ensure this road is not used for access under any circumstances.
- The temporary access to the side and rear is currently concrete. It must be confirmed that this is temporary and must not be made permanent.
- Traffic approaching from the south faces visibility issues.
- A planning condition must be imposed for noise mitigation, particularly regarding delivery hours and store opening hours. This is especially important for the plant room, which is close to residential properties. Enhanced mitigation, such as noise screening, should be considered as a condition of the application .

- The cycle paths from the estate to the store area must be enhanced and well lit. The police have already raised safety concerns, and the area must be well-lit to prevent vandalism or personal attacks due to its secluded nature.
- The town council is not satisfied with the deadline of 27th for submitting responses, especially as key reports from Southern Water and Highways are still outstanding. We reserve the right to comment further once these are available.

Traffic Diversion Concerns:

- We have serious concerns that diverted traffic will flow through residential roads including Park Croft, Farmlands Way, Farmlands Avenue, Broad Road, and Wannock Road, particularly affecting vehicles unable to turn right, and may also lead to increased traffic via The Thatchings and Clement Lane, potentially causing congestion and safety issues in these areas.
- There is also a concerns that St Johns Road and Church Road will be used to get around the traffic lights at the crossroads, which will likely face more traffic in a residential area.

Public Transport and Accessibility:

- Although the reports claim to support multi-modal public transport, there are only 8 public parking spaces and 4 for employees.
- The store appears to have two flights of steps at the entrance. There is no clear provision for mobility scooters or disabled access, which is a legal requirement.
- The only positive aspect in respect of accessibility of Polegate residents is the application's proximity to a bus stop.

Care Home Visibility and Demand:

- The proposed care home is three storeys high and located on top of a hill, making it highly visible.
- The council questions whether there is sufficient demand in the area to support this many care homes, as many in the area are now being built and not all are full.
- Consideration must also be given to the planned bus lane and the 40mph speed limit.

Trees and Nature:

- A significant number of trees are being removed, and there are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in place.

- There are also concerns about the presence of badger setts, where it is likely that the trees would be removed. These should NOT be disturbed.

Green Space and Sports Provision:

The Sports Planning Consultant's report claims the land has not been used for 20 years and that there is no deficit in recreational grounds. However, the report contains several inaccuracies:

- It incorrectly states that Polegate has a rugby pitch, it does not. Developments in Willingdon are the closest.
- It claims there is no demand for tennis courts or bowls, but the Town Council is aware of demand for tennis courts and has plans to provide some. The town council has not seen any surveys on this from the developer?
- At a minimum, a Section 106 contribution should be secured towards tennis courts and other nearby sports facilities in POLEGATE
- The report fails to measure local appetite for sports provision. This contradicts Wealden's Sport Infrastructure Fund (SIF) and the Local Plan Background Papers, which supported the development of the Hellingly Sports Hub and shows an overall deficit within Polegate.
- The Aldi Sports Planning Consultants report lists several reasons why the land is no longer required for playing fields, including the claim that after 5 years - and now over 20 years - of no use, the land is no longer 'protected' from a planning perspective. Over the years many have asked to use the field and been prevented from doing so. Therefore, to claim they are no longer required is not accurate.
- The report evaluates the entire development area primarily from the perspective of new housing recreational need. However, it fails to address the fact that there are not 6 acres of playing fields per 1,000 residents, which is a key benchmark. There is already a deficit in Polegate.

It also states that, since there is reported to be no demand for tennis, bowls, etc., there is no need to consider these facilities. This overlooks the fact that:

1. Residents currently travel to Eastbourne and other areas to access such facilities as there is no provision in Polegate.
2. The absence of local provision creates a lack of expectation, which in turn suppresses visible "demand" - a classic chicken-and-egg situation.

- The report does not consider the demographic shift occurring in the area, where bungalows are being converted into cottages or houses, likely leading to a younger population and changing recreational needs.
- It references multiple football pitches at Brightling, which appears misleading. There are currently no football pitches in Brightling Road Leisure ground Polegate, the town council now has planning permission to create ONE, but it not yet funded or created.
- The report also seems to suggest that rugby is fully catered for, which is not the case in Polegate. There are currently no rugby pitches in or planned for Polegate.
- Overdevelopment: The site is small and located in a small area, yet the proposal includes a large number of buildings, which are large is height and size constitutes overdevelopment.

Building Height and Impact on Residents:

- The height of the proposed buildings is a concern for nearby homes. The development would be overbearing and negatively impact the amenity of existing residents.
- The council is concerned about the overall effect on people living in the area.

Pollution:

- There are significant concerns about increased pollution resulting from the additional traffic generated by the development

We reserve the right to submit additional comments in relation to the Southern Water and Highways reports once they become available

It was resolved to submit the above objections and comments to the Wealden Planning. VOTE 9 FOR 1 Abstention.

The meeting closed at 11:01am

Signed Chair of Meeting _____ Date _____